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were ineffectual. In such cases the person who thinks he is wronged ⁶⁸⁵ may curse his suspected aggressor by calling on *Rum Adum*, the Just God, to punish him by making him halt, maimed and blind. If the aggressor should be guilty he or his relations will die.

In the case of disputes between individuals a solemn oath may ⁶²⁷ be made with religious ceremony, and also in the case of people who are suspected of evil doing without having any definite accusers; for instance, it would be open to Hlatam to make a solemn oath that she was not a poisoner; she has not done so. About twenty years ago, however, a man in a neighbouring village who was suspected of poisoning made the requisite ceremonies to swear that he was innocent of the victim's death;¹¹ his guilt is now believed to be firmly established, for he and all his kin subsequently died the same painful and lingering death. False swearing is for the Lepchas one ^[689] of the most important and unsocial crimes; the false swearer and his family would be shunned. But there is more to it than that; a perjurer among one's ancestors constitutes an hereditary taint; all the descendants of such a one will die young; and therefore in arranging marriages care must be taken to see that the intended spouse does not come of such a family.¹²

Personal quarrels are felt to be the concern of everybody, and every effort is made to prevent them, or to stop them once they have broken out. Annually in the autumn an elaborate ceremony is held in the monastery to destroy the trinity of devils (enmity of speech, thought and deed) who cause quarrelling; and the first action in any public or private lamaist ceremony is to invoke and destroy *Gett'r moong*, the quarrel demon, to prevent disputes among the celebrants, and especially the noisy abuse which may occur when people have drunk too much. In the unhappy event of a quarrel taking place despite these precautions a mutual friend of the two disputants will give a feast for them to try and make up the trouble. Should the quarrel continue for no apparent reason

¹¹ See Chapter Fifteen, pp. 392-393.

¹² The heredities which render a person undesirable as a marriage partner ^[582] are the following:—

- (1) *Sanaar Tsuk git* an ancestor has been killed by a bear.
- (2) *Doam git* an ancestor has died of leprosy.
- (3) *Rumdong git* an ancestor has died of a violent jaundice.
- (4) *Ryak mat git* an ancestor has committed perjury.
- (5) *Arot moong git* an ancestor has died by violence.

All these disabilities are believed to be hereditary.

- 627 it will be presumed that this is owing to the malevolent action of a supernatural, and exorcism will be resorted to.

It may happen, however, that the quarrel is of a more serious nature and consists of accusations and counter-accusations. Should such a quarrel break out there is a whole apparatus for patching it up without official notice being taken of it; should the Mandal hear of it in his official capacity, worse still should it go to the Court, it would be a terrible thing; there would be strict punishment and bad blood and that would be a slur on the community.

When a quarrel does break out the *gyapōn* will in the first instance go to both houses to find out the cause of the quarrel, and, if possible, to a third neutral person as witness. He talks diplomatically to both parties, softening each other's version of the incident; if he can make peace in this way all three will drink *chi* together and that is the end of the matter. If, however, the two parties persist in quarrelling (owing to a sense of injury) the *gyapōn* will instruct both parties to prepare *chi* and to have a certain sum of money ready—always considerably larger than what would actually be needed—in order to make the people realise the seriousness of their offence.

Chi takes about eight or nine days to be ready, and while it is brewing the *gyapōn* consults with the *yōumi*; they then make another effort to compose the quarrel without calling in the Mandal. The three adjudicators take a statement from each party and then, unless the blame is obviously on one side, they call them together and threaten them that if they do not make peace, they will be very heavily fined (say Rs. 25 from each of them). The sum demanded is calculated to be beyond their reach, so that they beg the *yōumi* and *gyapōn* not to proceed further; whereupon the *gyapōn* agrees to be contented with a much lesser sum, say Rs. 2/8 from each, or if they have no money, with a copper vessel or plate or anything of equivalent value. After that the two quarrellers and the three adjudicators eat and drink *chi* together; at the end of the feast the two quarrellers are given a wordy and imposing sermon on the duty of living amicably at peace one with another; at the end of the sermon the fines are returned and the whole matter is at an end.

- 627 In the last three years in Lingthem there have been two serious
578 quarrels. Both of them centred round Mrs. Jiroong; she is Tempa's sister, like him a foreigner to Zongu; she is far more aggressive and has a far more active ego-feeling than the other local-born Lepcha women. The first quarrel was with the wife of the lama

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Datoop whom she accused of seducing her husband ; they had two noisy and public quarrels in the guardian's house by the monastery, so that the Mandal was forced to interfere. Mrs. Datoop easily proved her innocence ; as a punishment Mrs. Jiroong has been permanently forbidden to enter the monastery compound when feasts are in progress. This effectively cuts her off from the major community relaxations, and incidentally gives her hen-pecked husband, who is a lama and therefore has to be present, an opportunity to escape from her constant scoldings. 627 ●
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The second quarrel was of a more complicated nature ; like the first, it represents an attitude towards sex which is completely alien to the Lepchas of Zongu. The facts are briefly as follows. Jiroong, the youngest son of a very poor family, was married by the Mandal to an old and childless widow (his first wife, since dead) so that he could inherit her property. His eldest brother had a son Tobgé who, on his father's death, gave up his old home, and went with his wife to go and live with his uncle and aunt. Mrs. Jiroong never liked Tobgé, whom she considered treated her without sufficient respect ; so, to revenge herself, she persuaded Mrs. Tobgé to run away with a young married neighbour named Dadool. To forward the elopement she accompanied Mrs. Tobgé and Dadool on a visit to Mrs. Tobgé's parents who live on the far side of the Teesta beyond Zongu. After they had been absent three days the matter was reported to the *gyapön*. Before they could take any action however it was learned that Jiroong and Tempa had already gone in pursuit. On their arrival they asked what was the meaning of the escapade, to which the women replied that they had come to see Mrs. Tobgé's family. Tempa and Jiroong were furious at this reply, and, they said subsequently, felt that they could have killed Mrs. Tobgé, whom they considered irresponsible and of a bad character ; but the girl had many ' brothers ', and they undertook to be responsible for her and to send her home. Dadool returned separately. On their return the Mandal lectured the two young people and told them that they were to live quietly with their own spouses and to behave in future.

Since then Tobgé and Dadool have kept the peace and appear friendly enough ; but the enmity between Tobgé and Mrs. Jiroong is stronger than ever, and there is no certainty that the affair will not flair up again. It is known that Dadool and Mrs. Tobgé are still sleeping together for they have been surprised in a field-house, but there is no way of telling if Tobgé himself knows of this.

● 627 For a few days Dadool worked for us, fetching fire-wood and
578 water. Jiroong's house is one of the nearest to the monastery.
One night, it was believed, Dadool did not return home, and in the
morning his wife was not in the home either. Towards midday a
very serious deputation, headed by Mrs. Datoop and Kurma
gyafön came and asked us to dismiss Dadool; the proximity of
Jiroong's house, it was felt, put temptation in his way. The
situation was discussed very seriously in low and distressed voices;
it was not, as similar circumstances would probably be with us, a
rather spicy piece of scandal—for the people involved were in no
way directly related—but the threat of impending general un-
pleasantness. If Mrs. Dadool had gone to complain to her
'brothers' there would be a considerable upset; they would send
their *bek-bu* (marriage go-between) to the Mandal, who had been
Dadool's *bek-bu*, to say 'You persuaded us to consent to this
marriage, and now see what has happened.' If this occurred the
Mandal would have to inflict two fines of Rs. 5/- each on Mrs.
Tobgé which she would have to pay to Mrs. Dadool, and Dadool
would have to pay Rs. 5/- to Tobgé. Fortunately on this occasion
their apprehensions were not realised; Dadool turned up in the
afternoon with a reasonable account of how he had spent the
previous evening; and later in the day his wife returned from
Mangan, whither she had gone to buy cigarettes.

The whole situation is a good illustration of Lepcha attitudes.
Normally sexual intercourse would not be the subject of serious
conversation at all, though it might be joked about; and it seems
probable that without Mrs. Jiroong's continual encouragement the
affaire would have lapsed long ago, for Dadool appears fond of his
wife and contented. But a quarrel or dispute is a menace to every-
body's happiness; half the pleasure is lost from a feast if there is a
feeling of discomfort in the air. For the Lepchas quarrelling is not
natural or inevitable, but a deplorable accident which it is
everybody's business to stop.